

In the claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a call waiting priority alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating ~~at least one~~ a plurality of priority codes with a telephone number of the telephone line, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels, each of the plurality of priority levels represents a degree of urgency and is associated with a priority alert signal that identifies the degree of urgency for the subscriber;

providing ~~[[a]]~~ multiple priority codes to a calling party prior to a call being placed by the calling party based on a desired priority level for to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for a call to the subscriber;

receiving ~~[[a]]~~ the call from the calling party who dialed the telephone number while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving one of the priority codes from the calling party during the call to the subscriber to allow the calling party to identify the level of urgency for the call;

~~determining whether the priority code matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;~~

playing a priority alert signal associated with the priority code provided by the calling party to interfere with the first communication session and alert the subscriber to the level of urgency of the call if the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;

~~executing a default action if the priority code provided by the calling party does not match any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number; and~~

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is unique to the calling party.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein one of the priority alert signals associated with one of the priority codes provided by the calling party is a regular call waiting tone.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising playing an announcement for the calling party if the calling party does not provide any priority code.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising playing an announcement for the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party does not match any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a priority call waiting services to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating a telephone number of the telephone line with a plurality of priority codes, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number represents a different priority level that is representative of a degree of urgency of a call;

assigning a priority alert signal to each of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number such that the priority alert signal of each of the plurality of priority codes identifies the degree of urgency for the subscriber;

providing ~~[[a]]~~ multiple priority codes to a calling party prior to a call being placed by the calling party based on a desired priority level for to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for a call to the subscriber;

receiving ~~[[a]]~~ the call from the calling party dialing the telephone number while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving one of the priority codes from the calling party during the call to the subscriber to allow the calling party to identify the level of urgency for the call;

determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;

playing a priority alert signal assigned to the priority code provided by the calling party to alert the subscriber to the level of urgency of the call from the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party matches one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein each priority alert signal assigned to each of the plurality of priority codes ~~associated with the telephone number~~ represents a different is unique to the calling party.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a second calling party is provided by the subscriber with more ~~than one of the plurality of~~ priority codes associated with the telephone number than is provided to the calling party.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A system for providing a priority call waiting alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the system comprising:

a switch in communication with the telephone line, wherein the switch is configured to detect incoming calls intended for the subscriber when the subscriber is already engaged in a first communication session with a third party, and

a processor in communication with the switch, wherein the processor is configured to review information associated with the subscriber,

wherein when the switch detects an incoming call intended for the subscriber from a calling party using a telephone number associated with the telephone line while the subscriber is already engaged in the first communication session with the third party, the switch launches a query comprising a subscriber number of the subscriber,

wherein when the processor receives the query, the processor instructs the switch to solicit a priority code that represents a degree of urgency from the calling party without interfering with the first communication session,

wherein ~~[[the]]~~ multiple priority codes ~~[[was]]~~ representing multiple degrees of urgency were previously provided to the calling party by the subscriber prior to the call based on a desired priority level for to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for the call to the subscriber,

wherein the processor instructs the switch to interrupt the first communication session with a priority alert signal if the priority code provided by the calling party is recognized by the processor to be one of a plurality of priority codes previously associated with the telephone number, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels that represents the degrees of urgency, each of the plurality of priority levels is associated with a priority alert signal that identifies the degree of urgency for the subscriber,

wherein the switch then suspends the first communication session, and establishes a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

12. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the switch is provisioned with a trigger.

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the trigger is a service switching point and the processor is a service control point.

14. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein one of the priority alert signals is a regular call waiting tone.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a call waiting priority alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating two or more priority codes with a telephone number of the telephone line in a database, wherein each of the two or more priority codes is associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels that represents a degree of urgency, each of the plurality of priority levels is associated with a priority alert signal that identifies the degree of urgency for the subscriber;

providing ~~[[a]] multiple~~ priority codes to a calling party prior to a call being placed by the calling party based on a desired priority level for to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for a call to the subscriber;

receiving ~~[[a]] the~~ call from the calling party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving a call from the calling party at the telephone line while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving one of the priority codes from the calling party during the call to the subscriber to allow the calling party to identify the level of urgency for the call; and

~~determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the two or more priority codes associated with the telephone number;~~

playing a priority alert signal associated with the priority code provided by the calling party to interfere with the first communication session between the subscriber and the third party and to alert the subscriber to the level of urgency of the call; and

~~establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.~~

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15, ~~wherein the plurality of priority levels are associated with a plurality of priority alert signals, wherein each of the plurality of priority signals represents a different calling party~~ further comprising establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is unique to the calling party.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15, ~~wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is one of several priority codes available to the calling party and wherein each of the several priority codes available to the calling party represents a~~

different priority level further comprising determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the two or more priority codes associated with the telephone number.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a priority call waiting services to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating a telephone number of the telephone line with a plurality of priority codes, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels that represent a degree of urgency;

assigning a priority alert signal to each of the plurality of priority codes to thereby identify the degree of urgency for the subscriber;

providing ~~[[a]]~~ multiple priority codes to a calling party prior to a call from the calling party to the subscriber based on a desired priority level for to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for a call to the subscriber;

receiving ~~[[a]]~~ the call from the calling party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving one of the priority codes from the calling party during the call to the subscriber to allow the calling party to identify the level of urgency for the call; and

~~determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;~~

playing a priority alert signal assigned to the priority code provided by the calling party to alert the subscriber to the level of urgency of the call if the priority code provided by the calling party matches one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number; and

~~establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.~~

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is unique to the calling party.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a second calling party is provided by the subscriber with more ~~than one of the plurality of~~ priority codes associated with the telephone number than is provided to the calling party.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, ~~wherein each of the more than one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number represents a different priority level~~ further comprising establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.